

# 2014 DRAKE RELAYS NOTES

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

Attendance: 5,614

Weather: Low - 48 (8 a.m.), High - 55 (12:31 p.m.)

Start - 53 degrees, rain, wind - 6 mph, WNW

Noon - 55 degrees, rain, wind - 5 mph, NNW

4 p.m. - 52 degrees, cloudy, wind - 3 mph, NNW

8 p.m. - 52 degrees, overcast - 1 mph, NNW

Total precipitation - 0.30 inches



## HOME SWEET HOME

Former Des Moines Christian athlete Lindsay Lettow of Urbandale, Iowa, repeated her title in the heptathlon, compiling 5,619 points during the two days of competition -- the eighth time an athlete has won back-to-back championships. Lettow took the lead with a solid race in the 200 meters (24.67), the final event of Wednesday's competition, and stayed in front during the final three events. Lettow was a four-time NCAA Division II champion at Central Missouri and a state champion hurdler and long jumper at Des Moines Christian. She trains under 15-time Drake Relays decathlon champion Kip Janvrin.

## MERRITT SWITCHES EVENTS

Olympic gold medalist Aires Merritt has pulled out of Moscow World Championships Rematch 110 hurdles and will run instead in the special shuttle hurdle relay, which will feature three teams of U.S. runners against and a Jamaican team. Antwon Hicks, fourth at the Olympic Trials in 2012, will replace Merritt in the 110 hurdles, to be run at 6:43 p.m. Friday. The men's shuttle goes off at 2:52 p.m. Saturday.

## JENKS MOVES TO NO. 1

Linn-Mar sophomore Stephanie Jenks produced the first record of the 2014 Drake Relays -- and did it in the best time ever by an Iowa girl in the 3000 meters. Jenks ran away from the pack early and even with no one pushing her, finished in 9:26.87 to shatter the Relays record. The previous state best was 9:27.25 by Dowling Catholic's Katie Flood. Flood held the old Relays record of 9:43.39, which she set in 2010. Jenks also won the Relays title as a freshman last year and remains in contention to match Flood as the only four-time champion in the event.

## HE'S THE FASTEST

Boone's Albert Meier became the first Iowa high school athlete to break the 9-minute mark in the 3200 meters, winning the Relays title in a sizzling 8:58.46. That easily beat the previous all-time best in Iowa of 9:04.33 by Des Moines Roosevelt's Jon Thomas 10 years ago. The old Relays record was 9:05.58 by Kevin Lewis of Ottumwa in 2011. Runner-up Josh Evans of Linn-Mar (9:01.55) and third-place Thomas Pollard of Gilbert (9:04.85) also beat the old Relays record. Evans' time goes down as the second best on Iowa's all-time list and Pollard now ranks fourth.

## FAMILIAR FEELING FOR FLOOD

Crossing the finish line first on Drake's Blue Oval is a familiar experience for Katie Flood and she did it again Thursday, anchoring Washington to a victory in the women's 4x1600 relay. Flood ran the final leg in 4:41.9 to bring the Huskies home in 19:09.31 -- the top mark in the U.S. this year. Flood won 11 state championships on the Drake track while running for Dowling Catholic and anchored two winning relay teams in the Drake Relays high school division. She also won the NCAA 1500-meter championship at Drake in 2012.

## IT'S A SWEEP

Washington became the third school to win the men's and women's 4x1600 when the men came through with a victory in 16:21.46, the second-fastest time in the last 20 years. Freshman Izaic York anchored for the Huskies in a swift 3:58.8. Minnesota (2009) and Stanford (2003) also accomplished the double at Drake. It was the second Relays title for Washington, which also won in 1999. Yorks was part of a young foursome. Washington also ran freshman Blake Nelson and sophomores Meron Simon and Nick Harris.

## A THREEPEAT FOR CONAWAY

Alexis Conaway of MOC-Floyd Valley became the third athlete to win three consecutive titles in the high school girls high jump. Conaway, a senior who'll play volleyball at Iowa State in the fall, cleared 5-5 to win championship No. 3. The others who won three in a row were Hannah Willms of Dike-New Hartford (2008-10) and Tiffanie Synacek of Council Bluffs Jefferson (2005-07). Conaway will be favored to win a fourth championship at next month's state meet.

## A LONG JUMP INDEED

Chandler Diercks of Clear Lake won the boys high school long jump with a leap of 23-10, the second best mark in Drake Relays history. Only the 23-11 3/4 by Davenport Central's Chris Walker in 1984 is better. Diercks' jump also tied for eighth on the state's all-time list.

## JAVRIN LEGACY CONTINUES:

Kip Janvrin no longer competes in the Drake Relays decathlon, but his impact is still being felt. Kurtis Brondyke, a graduate assistant on Janvrin's coaching staff at Central Missouri, won this year's competition with a score of 7,283 points. It's the first Relays title for Brondyke, who was an

NCAA Division III indoor champion and outdoor runner-up at Central College in Pella. Heptathlon winner Lindsay Lettow also trains under Janvrin, a 15-time Relays champion in the decathlon. Andre Dorsey of Kennesaw State was leading the competition until dropping out after eight events. Of the 27 athletes who started the competition, 15 finished.

## **SMASHING DEBUT**

Mary Alex England's first 10,000 meters couldn't have gone much better. The Mississippi freshman sprinted past Ohio State's Michelle Thomas in the final 50 meters to win the race in 34:48.66. That's a school record and more than 10 seconds faster the previous mark, which Kayleigh Skinner set at last year's Drake Relays. Thomas could not answer England's kick and was second in 34:49.11 in what was a two-person race most of the way. England was a late-comer to competitive distance running. She concentrated on swimming in high school and did not start running cross country until she was a senior. England enrolled at Ole Miss in the fall of 2012 but did not start running for the Rebels until last fall.

## **ANOTHER TITLE FOR LUSIGNAN**

Distance runner Trent Lusignan can add another title to his collection. Lusignan, a South Dakota State athlete who competed unattached, raced to a comfortable victory in the men's 10,000 in 29:55.69. His win on the Drake track follows four Summitt League titles -- three in track and one in cross country. He beat runner-up Brandon Shemonia by nearly 10 seconds.

## **TERRY'S TERRIFIC RUN**

TCU senior Patricia Terry topped her career best by a wide margin in winning the women's 5,000. Terry easily held off her challengers in posting a time of 16:17.57. She is an all-Big 12 performer and was third in the indoor mile at this year's conference championship meet. Her previous best in the 5,000 was 16:41.00 at last year's Mt. SAC Relays.

## **RECORD RUN FOR BOILERMAKER**

Purdue's Matt McClintock set a school record when he won the men's 5,000 in 14:01.33. McClintock, a sophomore, already held the school record for the indoor 5,000 and has Purdue's second-fastest time in the 10,000. Last fall, he became Purdue's first cross country All-American since 1987.